decided that a token fine of Saudi Riyals 25,000 (Rs. 2.5 lakhs) would be imposed on the contractor.

पारपत्र कार्यालयों का कम्प्यूटरीकरण

943. चौधरी हरमोहन सिंह यादव:
श्री ईश दत्त यादव:

क्या **प्रधान मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने सभी पारपत्र कार्यालयों को कम्प्यूटरीकृत कर दिया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो ऐसे पारपत्र कार्यालयों का ब्यौरा क्या है जिन्हें अब तक कम्प्यूटरीकृत किया जा चुका है; और

(ग) ऐसे पारपत्र कार्यालयों का ब्यौरा क्या है जिन्हें अब तक कम्प्यूटरीकृत नहीं किया गया है और इसके कारण क्या हैं?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे): (क) जी नहीं।

(ख) अहमदाबाद, बंगलौर, कलकत्ता, चण्डीगढ़, चेन्नई, कोचीन, दिल्ली, गोवा, हैदराबाद, जयपुर, कोजीकोड़, लखनऊ, मुम्बई, त्रिची और त्रिवेन्द्रम स्थित पासपोर्ट कार्यालयों का कम्प्यूटरीकरण कर दिया गया है।

(ग) बरेली, भोपाल, भुवनेश्वर, गाजियाबाद, गुवाहटी, जालन्धर, जम्मू नागपुर, पटना, थाणे, विशाखापट्टनम और श्रीनगर स्थित पासपोर्ट कार्यालयों का अभी तक कम्प्यूटरीकरण नहीं हुआ है। ये प्रायः वे कार्यालय हैं जो या तो हाल ही में खुले हैं या फिर इनमें अपेक्षाकृत कम संख्या में आवेदन प्राप्त होते है। इन कार्यालयों का कम्प्यूटरीकरण शीघ्र किए जाने की आशा है।

Passport Offices in States

944. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to increase the number of Passport Offices in every State;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it a fact that the present system of passport administration is not helpful to people; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to extend passport facilities all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. At present, 27 Passport Offices and 10 Collection Centres are functional all over the country. A Passprot Office at Pune is to be opened shortly.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Opening of new Passport Offices is based on certain parameters such as the location of existing Passport Offices, inflow of applications from a particular region, and the recommendations of the Standing Committee of Parliament for External Affairs that there must be at least 50,000 applications per annum from an area for a new Passport Office to be opened in that area.

Improvement in Passport Issuance System

945. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider suggestion from public spirited organisations to improve the passport issuance system.

(b) whether any efforts have been made to improve the system in Andhra Pradesh during 1998-99;

(c) whether innovative suggestions for improvement of passport administration in Andhra Pradesh would be considered sympathetically; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Of the two Passport Offices currently functioning at Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam in the state of Andhra Pradesh, the office at Hyderabad has

been computerised Equipment for computerisation of the office at Visakhapatnam is also already in place. Government propose to open Passport Collection Centers at Vijayawada and Tirupati, subject to allocation of appropriate office space by the state government.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Suggestions for Government's consideration may be forwarded either through the Passport Offices or directly to the Ministry of External Affairs.

Discussions held with U.S. Energy Secretary

946. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. Energy Secretary visited India last month; if so, the details of the discussions held; and

(b) the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Slave Trade

947. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Delhi a centre of slave trade to UK" which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the April 27, 1998; and

(b) if so, the reaction thereto including the immediate steps taken to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Applications pending in Regional Passport Offices

948. SHRI BHAGAVAN MAJHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending in each of the regional passport offices in the country as on date;

(b) the time since when these are pending and the reasons for the delay; and

(c) the details of the period under which all formalities related to issue of passport are likely to be completed/ cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) A tabulated statement of passport applications pending in various Passport Offices is laid on the table of the House. The reasons for delay in issue of passport are normally receipt of negative or incompelte reports from police authorities, discrepancies in documents submitted by the applicants, particularly in respect of applications received by post, lack of response from applicants who are asked to submit additional documents, etc. Every effort is being made to expedite disposal and clear the backlog of pending applications.